

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) Congressman Tim Ryan (D-Ohio) has joined other Democratic members of the House Education and Workforce Committee to hold a national online e-forum on college affordability. Members of Congress have posted their opening statements on the e-forum's website and are inviting students, parents and others to submit written testimony describing their experiences financing a college education. Individuals may also email video testimony to [CollegeForAll@mail.house.gov](mailto:CollegeForAll@mail.house.gov) .

The e-forum is an opportunity for parents, students and others concerned about rising college costs to communicate directly with Members of Congress and suggest ways in which Congress can improve college access and affordability for all Americans. Some submissions may be entered into the Congressional Record.

Congressman Ryan is the sponsor of the "[College Textbook Tax Credit Act](#) ", the "[Affordable Books for College Act](#) " and is a cosponsor of the "[Reverse the Raid on Student Aid Act](#) ".

More information on how to submit testimony can be found at <http://edworkforce.house.gov/democrats/makecollegeaffordable.shtml>

*The text of Congressman Ryan's opening statement for the e-forum is included below:*

\* \* \*

### **Opening Statement from Congressman Tim Ryan (D-OH)**

Welcome to the first-ever congressional e-forum on college affordability. I'm Congressman Tim Ryan from Ohio's 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and I hope you'll explore this e-forum and share your own unique concerns and experiences.

Democratic members of the House Education and Workforce Committee created this e-forum as an opportunity for parents, students, and others concerned about rising college costs to communicate directly to Members of Congress. You know more than anyone about the obstacles students and parents face as they try to finance a quality higher education amidst rising student loan interest rates, cuts to federal student aid programs, higher loan fees, decreases in the purchasing power of federal grants, and increases in costs for textbooks and supplies.

It's unfortunate that college affordability has become an issue that divides Congress along partisan lines, but the facts are all too clear. Earlier this year, Republicans in Congress passed a budget bill that cut a net \$12 billion from federal student aid programs the largest cut to student aid in the history of our country and one that students and parents will surely feel. Republicans also raised the fixed interest rate on parent borrowers from 7.9 percent to 8.5 percent.

Democrats, on the other hand, have been fighting back forcefully in both the House and Senate to reverse the Republican Congress' raid on student aid and we'll continue to offer proposals that ensure college remains affordable. For example, I've introduced bills that would

help make college textbooks more affordable. Congressman George Miller (D-CA), the Ranking Democrat on the Education Committee and host of this e-forum, has introduced legislation to cut loan interest rates in half for student and parent borrowers. Congressman Miller's legislation (**&quot;** [Reverse the Raid on Student Aid Act](#) **&quot;**;) would save the typical student loan borrower about \$5,600 over the life of his or her student loans. In addition, Democrats are also behind proposals to boost college participation rates for minority students and restore the buying power of the federal Pell Grant.

Students and parents should not have to bear the weight of overwhelming debt because they've chosen to further their education a choice whose benefits surely extend to all of society. If America is stay competitive in today's global economy, we must ensure that we have all our players on the field, playing at their best ability.

Please take this opportunity to share your own experiences trying to finance college and tell us what you think Congress should do to expand college access and affordability